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Following Jesus.

Man of sorrows, mighty God,
Thou the path of life hast trod,
And each step we take, we meet
Print-marks of thy sacred feet.
Sad indeed thy lot in life,
Cruel foes and ceaseless strife,
Pain and persecution thine,
Man of sorrows, Lord divine.
When did soul such burden bear
As once wrung from thee the prayer,
"Father, if it so may be
Let this cup now pass from me?"
Yet we hear thee in thy grief,
Borne to yield our souls relief,
Saying, oh thou burdened One,
"Not my will, but thine be done!"

Thine for us the cursed cross,
For our gain such direful loss,
From what burden shall we shrink?
Or what cup refuse to drink?

Welcome aught our Father sends,
Since with all such grace he lends!
Welcome e'en the chast'ning rod
In the loving hands of God.

—R. M. OFFORD.

Sowing Wild Oats.

Sowing wild oats is a vulgar expression used to designate a career of wickedness, which comprises a portion of the history of many men's lives; or actual engagement in works of vileness and iniquity.

There are rude moralists who hold that a portion of life spent in wickedness is a necessity, but on grounds that have not been defined and without the support of argument or reason. No one can say that experience in sin bears desirable fruit, and it has not been claimed that pleasant crops have been gathered from the sowing of wild oats, which is so common in life, that an unusual harvest might possibly follow, if there was not the precision of fate in the law that overrules the relation that that class of seed bears to the fruit it produces.

On the part of man, there seems to be an allowance for a season of wickedness, which must be completed before there is a devotion to the true, the substantial, and the righteous; and when a youth grows up in devotion and application to pious habits and devout practices, he is regarded as a wonder, a monstrosity, or a very peculiar being and a stranger among the families of the earth.

But such a youth is only natural. There is nothing natural about sin and desperate wickedness. It is all abnormal, and contrary to true nature. No faculty of malice, murder, jealousy, hatred, variance, strife, hypocrisy, deceit, maliciousness or intemperance, exists in the human character; and if those faculties which belong to man were confined to their natural sphere of action, uniform consistency and commendable morality and piety would be the predominating characteristics of every creature that moves and exists in human form. Evil is only the abuse of that which is designed for an ennobling purpose; so, when the adversary of holiness appeared in the arena of human activity, he did not plant in the character of man any new, moral, intellectual or passion power, but only occasioned the abuse of what had already been created by God and exercised by man. Therefore, sin is not a natural entity, but an abnormal exercise, and the sowing of wild oats is not to be encouraged or even condoned, and should be looked upon by man

as it is by the Creator—without the least degree of allowance.

The work of life is a work of purification. The contaminating influences of the power of darkness affect all men, and the one important and chief aim of life is the cleansing of the heart from impurities, and the direction of the mental powers, which are a part of our inheritance, into normal and legitimate exercise, which embraces a clean and virtuous mortal life and preparation for the immortal life as commanded by divine authority. To attain to the highest state of true manhood and Christian perfection, the aspirant must devote himself to the practice of the virtues and righteousness from very childhood. The early years of life spent in dissipation and the abuse of inherited mental powers, will so deaden the moral sensibilities and derange their control over the passions of the victim, that the remaining years of life will be required to regain the ground lost by youthful folly and self-abandonment, and in disposing of the harvest of evil that the seed sown in forbidden soil is sure to bring forth.

The young man who sows wild oats freely will enter upon the substantial work of life with a grievous burden in the form of one or more baneful habits, which will cling to him with the grip of death, and impair his efficiency as a laborer in any commendable engagement he may undertake, and harass him in every effort of reform and in every work of moral improvement.

The obligation is most pressing upon parents to be consistent Christians, and by their example and teachings bring their children into the fold of the Sovereign Master, before the evil days come on, and before the habit of sowing wild oats is contracted. Ed.

If you had the abilities of all the great men, past and present, you could do nothing well, without sincerely meaning it, and setting about it.

We should take a prudent care for the future, but so as to enjoy the present. It is no part of wisdom to be miserable to-day, because we may be happy to-morrow.

Beware how you allow words to pass for more than they are worth, and bear in mind what alteration is sometimes produced in their current value by the course of time.

If one only wished to be happy, this could be readily accomplished; but we wish to be happier than other people, and this is almost always difficult, for we believe others to be happier than they are.

There is no doing anything with a man who does nothing but think. The lawyers and doctors did not flock into the ancient church. Thought is the cold lightning-rod; feeling the sparkling point on the top where air is charged with electricity. All the apostles had blood in them and a pulse.

The Religious World.

About seventy-two percent. of the entire population of England belongs to the Established Church.

A society of colored people exists in New York City, known as the "White Cross Society." They aim at absolute personal purity.

The International Sunday School Lesson Committee is to meet in Cincinnati, April 15th. Earnest discussions are in progress as to what lesson plans they should adopt.

The Rev. B. A. Carlson, missionary, in Finland, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, reports advance in his work. His mission is commanding an increased interest among the people.

The Rev. Wm. Harris, Treasurer of Princeton College, and a Presbyterian minister, died suddenly at Savannah, on the 24th. He was traveling alone and his identity was not discovered until the next day.

A Baptist preacher in Rabun county, Georgia, is one hundred and one years old. He is too feeble to leave his house, but his little congregation gathers round his bed every Sunday to hear him preach and pray.

At the recent installment of Rev. Michael Burnham over the First Church, of Springfield, Massachusetts, he said, in answer to questions: "I believe the devil is a person. The penal element is in the atonement; you can't take it out. I believe all the books in the Bible are equally inspired."

The Lutherans of this country seem to be much more successful in creating separations than in forming unions. A free Norwegian conference was lately held in Chicago, and was attended by representatives of the four Norwegian Lutheran bodies in this country, for the purpose of seeing if a *modus vivendi* could be found. No definite result was reached.

The Presbyterian is the only denomination that has entered Alaska with any show of earnestness. It has occupied all the more important points in South-eastern Alaska. It has laid claim, religiously speaking, to the great Alexandria Archipelago, with its 1,500 islands. It has made itself responsible for their evangelization.

Archbishop Ryan administered the rite of confirmation recently, to some 800 persons in the Catholic churches of Pottsville, Pa. The occasion was celebrated by a large procession of uniformed Catholic societies, headed by the Third Brigade band, escorting the Archbishop, who rode in a barouche drawn by four horses.

Mrs. Spurgeon has, for some years, energetically and successfully conducted a Book Fund for the distribution of literature to ministers of restricted means. The Ninth Annual Report says that, during the past year, there have been sent out 9,149 volumes, besides 21,221 single sermons, the contributions during the year being £1,461.

Bishop McQuaid, Roman Catholic, of Rochester, N. Y., has ordered that hereafter, in his diocese, none but Roman Catholics and actual communicants shall sing in the choir. He says: "How revolting it is for the congregation to hear the voice of one who does not believe in what he or she is singing. It is mockery, instead of worship."

The Gospel, according to St. John, in Arabic, can be purchased for about two cents. A pocket Arabic Testament costs about twelve cents. A pocket Arabic Bible costs about twenty-five cents. It costs from \$50 to \$240 a year to support a teacher or helper in Syria. It costs from \$40 to \$180 to support a pupil in a mission boarding school for a year.

A "pastoral" against dancing having been issued under the authority of the Free Church Presbytery of Aberdeen, Scotland, an effort was made to withdraw the sanction and approval of the Presbytery from the document. The effort was unsuccessful. Eleven ministers and twelve elders voted for approval, and eleven ministers and one elder for disapproval of the pastoral.

The Waldensians at present number 17 congregations, with 12,800 members; 195 day schools with 5,500 scholars and 200 teachers; 70 Sunday schools, with 3,600 pupils. The principal stations of these people are Turin, Florence, Rome, Naples. The Waldensians are increasing but slowly, and the schools are becoming smaller, because the Roman Catholics are everywhere planting schools near theirs, and thus drawing off many of the children.

Take especial care that thou delight not in wine, for there was not any man that came to honor or preferment that loved it; for it transformeth man into a beast, decayeth health, poisoneth the breath, destroyeth natural heat, brings a man's stomach to an artificial heat, deformeth the face, rotteth the teeth, and to conclude, maketh a man contemptible, soon old, and despised by all wise and worthy men; hated in thy servant, in thyself and companion; for it is a bewitching and infectious vice.

A drunkard will never shake off the delight of beastliness; for the longer it possesses a man, the more he will delight in it; and the older he groweth, the more will he be subject to it; for it dulles the spirits, and destroyeth the body as ivy does the old tree, or the worm that engendereth in the kernel of a nut. Take heed, therefore, that such a cureless canker pass not thy youth nor such a beastly infection thy old age; for then shall all thy life be as the life of a beast, and after thy death thou shalt only leave a shameful infamy to thy posterity, who shall study to forget that such a one was their father.—SIR WALTER RALPH.

As to trouble, who expects to find cherries without stones, or roses without thorns?

Souls not Immortal.

The expression of "Saving immortal souls" is frequently found in pulpit oratory and in religious literature, including hymns. The thought, probably, never occurred to those in the habit of using it, that it is self-contradictory. Immortal means exemption from liability to die; destined to live in all ages of the world; exempt from death or annihilation; imperishable. If a soul is imperishable and exempt from death, how can it be saved? or what is it saved from?

The fact is, there is nothing immortal about the soul. It is perishable to the same extent that any other fabric or earthly object is, under the command of divine Omnipotence. He is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna, and under the exercise of that power, the destruction of the one would be just as complete as the other.

The scriptures nowhere recognize such an entity as an immortal soul; but it speaks of immortality as a possession that is obtainable, by pursuing a life in harmony with the teaching of the Son of God. At the Great Day this mortal shall put on immortality. The souls of the redeemed will enter immortal bodies; while the sleeping saints will come forth with immortal bodies from their abode in the unseen.

It would be as consistent to talk about converting and saving God, as it is to talk about saving immortal souls. God is the only original immortality, and to become immortal is to partake of his personal substance, which is not possible so long as the soul dwells in the flesh. The germ of immortality is planted in the heart, but it cannot produce a body before the old body dies.

Matter is indestructible, and soul-substance is probably also; but there is a vast difference between the immortality of divine revelation and the indestructibility of matter.

We would change the verse:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky."

We would make it read, "An ever dying soul"; for without God our souls are ever dying; and a dying soul needs salvation, while a never dying soul has no need of it. A.

Trouble and perplexity drives me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.—MELANCTHON.

Our grand business in life is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.—CARLYLE.

Reason and faith resemble two sons of the patriarch; reason is the first born, but faith inherits the blessing.—CULVERWELL.

When any calamity has been suffered the first thing to be remembered is how much has been escaped.—JOHNSON.

Live as with God and whatever may be your calling, pray for the gift that will perfectly qualify you in it.—HORACE BUSHELL.